



## Senior Wire Fraud Scam Alert

January 30, 2009

The disproportionate victimization of older people in connection with fraud is partly based on generational and economic factors. Most seniors grew up in an era when business was done on a handshake, and family relationships are strong and to be cherished; unfortunately, crooks are playing on that trust.

Scams and frauds conducted by mail and telephone are increasingly coming to you from Canada, Australia, and other countries.

The St. Paul Police Department has received several reports where a caller pretends to be a niece or nephew of the victim. Over the phone, they explain to the victim they are in Canada and are facing a minor crisis, or they are in jail, and are requesting the victim wire money to them to alleviate their problem. In the most recent case, the scam artist said he was a friend of the victim's son and asked the victim to "send American money to Canada to help convert Canadian currency into American currency."

Unfortunately, if you fall victim to this scam and do wire money to a scam artist, you will have lost the money, and it is not reimbursable in most instances. You may have little recourse. The scam artists are on the run, moving to avoid detection, and are difficult to catch. Law enforcement may also have little recourse.

Knowledge and skepticism are your best defenses. Do **not** wire money to someone you don't know in a foreign country! If they portray themselves as someone known to you, and they are in a foreign country, **verify** this fact with a trusted relative or someone else known to both of you who can verify the caller's identity, whereabouts, and circumstances. Don't be talked into letting them have someone else call you back – **you make the calls to verify!** Be skeptical until you assure yourself otherwise.

Contacts:

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